

Testimony for the GAE Committee
March 17, 2010
Public Hearing on SB No. 28 - An Act Consolidating State Agencies
and Eliminating Certain Legislative Commissions

By: William Eddy

Good afternoon Chair Slossberg, Chair Spallone, and distinguished members of the GAE Committee. My name is Bill Eddy. Today I am testifying against eliminating the Connecticut Commission on Aging, which delivers actionable research and recommendations for the State to save money and become more cost-effective while maintaining and enhancing quality of life choices for the State's senior citizens.

I am not testifying as the Commission's board Vice- Chair but as an involved, conservative Connecticut taxpayer who has volunteered his time on aging matters on behalf of the State of Connecticut for over 10 years, and exclusively with the Commission on Aging since 2005.

It is encouraging to observe this committee, the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes and others in the General Assembly leading efforts to find affordable short- and long-term solutions to stabilize Connecticut's fiscal health. As you proceed in this important work, I urge you to fully engage the Commission on Aging for its proven expertise in providing expert, objective research and counsel in all matters concerning our state's soaring population of older adults. In particular, the Commission's actionable recommendations to "rebalance" the long-term care system infrastructure can save hundreds of millions of dollars annually on Medicaid expenditures alone. Please take full advantage of this valuable resource.

It is equally encouraging to note that the Results Based Accountability process overseen by the Appropriations Committee, and the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes review overseen by this committee, are addressing roadblocks to effective planning. Again, the Commission on Aging fully embraces the RBA process.

No matter what the economic outcome for the state's fiscal woes, the state needs the Commission on Aging. It needs the Commission on Aging because the commission has already proven it provides ongoing valuable knowledge, internal guidance, and critique on aging policy. It has already researched and identified inefficiencies in related state programs, services, and delivery structure on long- term care that presently engulf over 13% of the total state budget.

In my opinion, the independent non-partisan Commission on Aging, with its small budget and proven by its own efficiencies of operation, accomplishments, and identification of millions in untapped federal funds now flowing into the State, should be

retained to continue to play its important, thoughtful advisory role in connection with streamlining the state's complex and expensive long- term care delivery structure.

The elimination of the Commission, which is already excelling under Results Based Accountability and Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes performance criteria, will mean that the State will not be maximizing its return on an investment already made.

The investment already made, in both short and long- term planning ready for pursuit and execution in the very expensive and fragmented arena of long- term care, should be cherished and nurtured rather than smothered and crushed under the temptation to focus upon the short- term only when decisions with long as well as short- term substance are required

I hope the state will start spending my tax dollars more wisely. I am very comfortable with its continued investment in the Commission on Aging despite the fact that the state's own track record is, in some ways, questionable. I believe that Results Based Accountability and the Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes activities are encouraging steps toward getting the state back on a stronger planning and financial footing. Please don't give up the thoughtful way in which you are pursuing your charge.

Thank you for letting me express my views.

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